

Appl. No.: 10/651,137

Reply to Office Action of: December 15, 2004

Remarks

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. Claims 1-18 stand rejected. the following remarks are addressed to the referenced paragraphs of the Office Action dated July 6, 2004.

Paragraph 1-2 Claim Rejection 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-12, and 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowen, et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5,039,456) in view of Kumar, et al., (U.S. Patent No. 6,611,648B2).

Independent claims 1 and 11 have been cancelled. The remaining dependant claims have been amended to depend from claims 2 and 13 respectfully. The rejection of claims 1, 3-12, and 14-16 is therefore moot.

Claim 17 has been amended to recite first and second latching rings located on each of the pillars for receiving a latch insert. Since the combination of Bowen, et al., in view of Watanabe, et al., neither teaches nor suggests first and second latching rings, claims 17 and 18 are patentably distinct from the combination.

Paragraph 3 Claim Rejection 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowen, et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5,039,456) and Watanabe et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,832,720) as applied to claims 1, 3-12 and 14-16 above, and further in view of Bowen, et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,418,983). The Office Action acknowledges that Bowen '456 only discloses one securing means and then relies upon Bowen '983 for disclosure of an optical wave guide connector 2 having a plurality of spaced gripping flanges 10 for securing the connector 2 within the plug 58

Appl. No.: 10/651,137

Reply to Office Action of: December 15, 2004

and retention flange 12 and a rib 14 for engaging with a passage way 40 of a receptacle 38. The Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to modify the optical fiber short circuit insert taught by Bowen '456 such that it would have one or more shoulders for primary securing and secondary securing of the short circuit insert and a plug housing as taught by Bowen '983 because the use of a shoulder is a simple structure that provides a secure engagement between two objects. Applicants respectfully disagree and furthermore assert that the Examiner has mischaracterized the Bowen '983 reference. In Bowen '983 gripping flanges 10 are provided integral with the rearward portion 4 of the plug member and do not serve to secure the connector 2 within the plug 58. The plug 58 is instead an alternative illustration showing a duplex plug 58 for terminating a pair of optical wave guides. The duplex plug 58 comprises a pair of forward projecting plug members which are incased jointly in an elastomeric plug body 68 as described in column 7, lines 1-5 of Bowen '983. Nowhere does the Bowen '983 teach nor suggest that gripping flanges 10 act in any way to secure the connector 2 within a plug. Furthermore, the Examiner has mischaracterized the rib 14. The element number 14 is an alignment rib and not a securing rib. As described in column 6, lines 21-31, the body of the intermediate portion 6 does not frictionally engage the receptacle, but rather an axial gap 56 exists between the annular alignment rib 14 and the protrusions 28, 30 of the plug member. The gap reduces insertions friction and enables the plug to be inserted with minimal amount of insertion force to achieve an alignment function solely by operation of the rib 14 and protrusions on the alignment nose 8 of the plug member. The Bowen '456 reference therefore does not teach nor suggest any secondary locking mechanism. The rejection of claims 2 and 13 are therefore respectfully overcome.

Appl. No.: 10/651,137
Reply to Office Action of: December 15, 2004

Paragraph 4 Claim Rejection 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bowen, et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5,039,456) and Watanabe et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,832,720) as applied to claims 1, 3-12 and 14-16 above, and further in view of Graham, et al., (U.S. Patent No. 4,952,798). The Examiner asserts that while Bowen does not show two halves of the housing, Graham discloses the same optical simulator 10 comprising a housing having two halves 13 and 14. Claim 18 depends from amended claim 17 which is patentably distinct from the combination of Bowen and Watanabe as described above. Therefore, claim 18 is believed to be patentably distinct from that combination. The addition of Graham to the irrelevant combination of Bowen and Watanabe does not teach nor suggest the added limitations of first and second latching rings located on each pillar for receiving a latching insert.

Newly Added Claims

Claims 19-21 are added to precisely claim an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. No new matter has been added.

Appl. No.: 10/651,137
Reply to Office Action of: December 15, 2004

Conclusion

For all the foregoing reasons and in view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully contend that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments, allowance of claims 1-21 and issuance of Letters Patent for the subject invention. Please charge any additional requisite fees relating to this amendment and response to Deposit Account No. 50-1581.

Respectfully submitted,



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